

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-49. (Cancelled)

50. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring connection transactions with access providers, the method comprising:

receiving, at an intermediary device ~~that is configured to facilitate communications between a requestor device and first and second access providing hosts~~, a first connection transaction request from ~~[[the]]~~ a requestor device that requests access to ~~the first an~~ access providing host;

~~subsequent to receiving the first connection transaction request, receiving, at the intermediary device, a second connection transaction request from the requestor device that requests access to the second access providing host;~~

~~determining, at the intermediary device, that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time-out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request; and~~

comparing, at the intermediary device, an identity of the requestor device to information identifying requestor devices from which the intermediary device has previously received a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request; and

~~based on the determination that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time-out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, blocking, at the~~

intermediary device, the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request to prevent the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request from reaching the ~~second~~ access providing host when the comparison reveals that the intermediary device previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement.

51. (Cancelled)

52. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein the intermediary device is a switch capable of performing ~~configured to perform~~ load balancing for the access providing host techniques for communications directed to the first and second access providing hosts.

53. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[50]] 72 wherein determining, at the intermediary device, whether ~~[[that]]~~ the first connection transaction request ~~resulted~~ results in a partially-completed connection transaction ~~that reached in which~~ a time out condition is reached prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request comprises:

~~accessing, at the intermediary device, a time out threshold;~~
~~measuring, at the intermediary device, an amount of time that the intermediary has been waiting for an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request;~~
~~comparing, at the intermediary device, the measured an amount of time that the intermediary device has been waiting for an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request to [[the]] a time out threshold; and~~
~~determining, at the intermediary device, that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition when the comparison reveals that the measured amount of time exceeds the time out threshold.~~

54. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein, at the time of blocking the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request, the intermediary device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that requested access to the

~~second access providing host and that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time-out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request.~~

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 wherein blocking, at the intermediary device, the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request further comprises delaying termination of a partially-completed connection transaction based on the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request to allow the intermediary device to continue monitoring communications from the requestor device ~~to the second access providing host.~~

56. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 50 further comprising:
~~determining, at the intermediary device, whether a return address included in the second connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device; and~~
blocking, at the intermediary device, the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request in response to a determination that ~~[[the]]~~ a return address included in the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request differs from ~~[[the]]~~ an actual return address of the requestor device.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 56 wherein ~~determining, at the intermediary device, whether the return address included in the second connection transaction request differs from the actual return address of the requestor device~~ blocking, at the intermediary device, the first connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return address included in the first connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device comprises ~~determining, at the intermediary device, whether~~ blocking, at the intermediary device, the first connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return Internet protocol address included in the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request differs from an actual return Internet protocol address of the requestor device.

58. (Currently Amended) A networking device comprising:
a processor; and

a memory encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

~~facilitating communications between a requestor device and first and second access providing hosts;~~

~~receiving a first connection transaction request from [[the]] a requestor device that requests access to the first an access providing host;~~

~~subsequent to receiving the first connection transaction request, receiving a second connection transaction request from the requestor device that requests access to the second access providing host;~~

~~determining that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request; and~~

~~comparing an identity of the requestor device to information identifying requestor devices from which the networking device has previously received a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request; and~~

~~based on the determination that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, blocking the second first connection transaction request to prevent the second first connection transaction request from reaching the second access providing host when the comparison reveals that the networking device previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement.~~

59. (Cancelled)

60. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim 58 wherein the networking device is a switch ~~configured to perform~~ capable of performing load balancing for the access

~~providing host techniques for communications directed to the first and second access providing hosts.~~

61. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim [[58]] 76 wherein determining, ~~at the intermediary device, that whether~~ the first connection transaction request ~~resulted results~~ in a partially-completed connection transaction ~~that reached in which~~ a time out condition ~~is reached~~ prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request comprises:

~~accessing, at the intermediary device, a time out threshold;~~

~~measuring, at the intermediary device, an amount of time that the intermediary has been waiting for an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request;~~

~~comparing, at the intermediary device, the measured an amount of time that the networking device has been waiting for an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request to [[the]] a time out threshold; and~~

~~determining, at the intermediary device, that the first connection transaction request resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition when the comparison reveals that the measured amount of time exceeds the time out threshold.~~

62. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim 58 wherein, at the time of blocking the ~~second first~~ connection transaction request, the networking device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that requested access to the second access providing host ~~and that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the connection transaction request.~~

63. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim 58 wherein blocking the ~~second first~~ connection transaction request further comprises delaying termination of a partially-completed connection transaction based on the ~~second first~~ connection transaction request to allow the ~~intermediary networking~~ device to continue monitoring communications from the requestor device ~~to the second access providing host.~~

64. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim 58 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

~~determining whether a return address included in the second connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device; and~~

blocking the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request in response to a determination that ~~[[the]]~~ a return address included in the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request differs from ~~[[the]]~~ an actual return address of the requestor device.

65. (Currently Amended) The networking device of claim 64 wherein ~~determining whether the return address included in the second connection transaction request differs from the actual return address of the requestor device~~ blocking the first connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return address included in the first connection transaction request differs from an actual return address of the requestor device comprises ~~determining whether~~ blocking the first connection transaction request in response to a determination that a return Internet protocol address included in the ~~second~~ first connection transaction request differs from an actual return Internet protocol address of the requestor device.

66. (Currently Amended) A method of monitoring access requests to access providers comprising:

observing, using an intermediary device other than an access providing host that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's submission of an access request to a first access providing host;

accessing, using the intermediary device, stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;

comparing, using the intermediary device, the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors; and

when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host; and

~~when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;~~

~~monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request; and~~

~~to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.~~

67. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 66 wherein denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted, ~~to an access providing host other than the first access providing host,~~ a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

68. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 66 wherein the intermediary device is a switch ~~configured to perform~~ capable of performing load balancing techniques for ~~communications directed to~~ the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

69. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 66 further comprising:
~~determining whether a return address included in the access request differs from an actual~~
~~return address of the requestor's device; and~~
denying the access request in response to a determination that [[the]] a return address
included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

70. (Currently Amended) A networking device, other than an access providing host
that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, comprising:

- a processor; and
- a memory encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the
processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:
 - observing information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's
submission of an access request to a first access providing host;
 - accessing stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access
providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have
submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an
acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;
 - comparing the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored
information identifying previous requestors; and
 - when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access
request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to
the previous access request, denying the access request submitted by the requestor while
denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host; and
 - ~~when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous~~
~~access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement~~
~~corresponding to the previous access request;~~

- ~~monitoring a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the~~
~~access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor~~
~~submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request, and~~

~~to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.~~

71. (Currently Amended) A storage medium encoded with instructions that, when executed by a processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising:

observing, using an intermediary device other than an access providing host that assigns resources responsive to inbound access requests, information identifying a requestor based on receipt of the requestor's submission of an access request to a first access providing host;

accessing, using the intermediary device, stored information identifying previous requestors, of the first access providing host as well as of other access providing hosts, that are determined to have submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;

comparing, using the intermediary device, the observed information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors; and

when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host; ~~and~~

~~when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request;~~

~~monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time-out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request; and~~

~~to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information~~

~~identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.~~

72. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising, when the comparison reveals that the intermediary device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement, determining, at the intermediary device, whether the first connection transaction request results in a partially-completed connection transaction in which a time out condition is reached prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request.

73. (New) The method of claim 72 further comprising, in response to a determination that the first connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, terminating the first connection transaction request.

74. (New) The method of claim 72 further comprising, in response to a determination that the first connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, adding the identity of the requestor device to the information identifying one or more requestor devices to enable blocking of future connection transaction requests received from the requestor device.

75. (New) The method of claim 50 further comprising determining, at the intermediary device, the identity of the requestor device, wherein comparing, at the intermediary device, the identity of the requestor device to the information identifying requestor devices comprises comparing, at the intermediary device, the determined identity of the requestor device to the information identifying one or more requestor devices.

76. (New) The networking device of claim 58 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to

cause the processor to perform operations comprising, when the comparison reveals that the networking device has not previously received, from the requestor device, a connection transaction request that resulted in a partially-completed connection transaction that reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement:

determining whether the first connection transaction request results in a partially-completed connection transaction in which a time out condition is reached prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request.

77. (New) The networking device of claim 76 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, in response to a determination that the first connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, terminating the first connection transaction request.

78. (New) The networking device of claim 76 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, in response to a determination that the first connection transaction request has reached a time out condition prior to receipt of an acknowledgement corresponding to the first connection transaction request, adding the identity of the requestor device to the information identifying one or more requestor devices to enable blocking of future connection transaction requests received from the requestor device.

79. (New) The networking device of claim 58 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising determining the identity of the requestor device, wherein comparing the identity of the requestor device to the information identifying requestor devices comprises comparing the determined identity of the requestor device to the information identifying one or more requestor devices.

80. (New) The method of claim 66 further comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

81. (New) The method of claim 80 further comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.

82. (New) The networking device of claim 70 wherein denying the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

83. (New) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the networking device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

84. (New) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising:

denying the access request in response to a determination that a return address included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

85. (New) The networking device of claim 70 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

86. (New) The networking device of claim 85 wherein the memory is further encoded with machine readable instructions that, when executed by the processor, operate to cause the processor to perform operations comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.

87. (New) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor while denying passage of the access request to the first access providing host comprises denying, using the intermediary device, the access request submitted by the requestor when the comparison reveals that the requestor has submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request based on a previous access request submitted to an access providing host other than the first access providing host.

88. (New) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the intermediary device is a switch capable of performing load balancing for the first access providing host as well as the other access providing hosts.

89. (New) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising:

denying the access request in response to a determination that a return address included in the access request differs from an actual return address of the requestor's device.

90. (New) The storage medium of claim 71 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising, when the comparison reveals that the requestor has not submitted a previous access request that has timed out prior to submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the previous access request, monitoring, using the intermediary device, a partially-completed connection transaction resulting from the access request to determine whether a time out condition occurs prior to requestor submission of an acknowledgement corresponding to the access request.

91. (New) The storage medium of claim 90 wherein the storage medium is further encoded with instructions that, when executed by the processing device, operate to cause the processing device to perform operations comprising, to the extent that a time out condition is determined to exist, adding, using the intermediary device, information identifying the requestor to the stored information identifying previous requestors for use in comparing against future requestors that submit an access request.